

Allah has mentioned no woman in the Qur'an directly by her proper name except Mary, and the name 'Mary' occurs 34 times in the Qur'an. The only Surah, which has been entitled by the name of a woman in the Qur'an, is this very Surah, Surah Mary.

For the virtue of studying this Surah, it has been cited that whoever continues reciting this Surah (whenever he can), he will not die save that Allah will suffice him in life, wealth and children.¹

There is no doubt, of course, that the one will make himself free from want from others by means of practicing the contents of this Surah.

16. "And mention in the Book about Mary when she withdrew from her family to an eastern place."

17. "So she took a veil (to screen herself) apart from them. Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Holy Spirit) that presented himself to her a perfect man."

The Messenger of Allah (S) said that Mary was one of the four typical godly women.

The Arabic term /nabaða/ means: 'to throw away something inattentively', while the Qur'anic word /'intibað/ is used for 'seeking retirement from people'. Since Mary was dedicated to 'The Remote Mosque', she had chosen a corner in the east of the mosque for herself.

After the statement of the explanation about Yahya (John), through these holy verses, the Qur'an refers to the story of Jesus (as) and his mother's fate, because there is a close connection between these two occurrences.

The birth of Yahya (John) to an aged father and a barren mother was a wonderful thing, but the birth of Jesus, from a mother without a father, was something even more marvelous.

It is surprising, of course, for a person be given wisdom and prophethood in childhood, but it is more surprising than that that he, as a baby, speaks in cradle concerning the Book and prophecy.

However, both of them are signs of the Power of Allah, the Exalted, and, they both concerned people who had a very close blood relationship with each other, because John's mother was Mary's maternal aunt both of whom were barren and longed for a righteous child.

The verse says:

"And mention in the Book about Mary when she withdrew from her family to an eastern place."

In fact she humbly and anonymously withdrew from her family and went to a place in the temple free from any disturbance in order to pray and to tell her secrets to Allah.

At this time, Mary put a veil between herself and those people to screen herself away from them so that her private place could be suitable for worship and away from the prying eyes of people.

The verse says:

“So she took a veil (to screen herself) apart from them...”

Then one of the great angels (Holy Spirit), in the form of a perfect handsome man, without any defect, presented himself to Mary and, by the might of Allah, fulfilled his mission.

It was just as Allah, the Most High, in the Qur’an says:

“Blessed be He in Whose hand is Domination; and He is All-Powerful over everything.”¹

The verse under discussion continues saying:

“...Then We sent unto her Our Spirit (Holy Spirit) that presented himself to her a perfect man.”

18. “She said: ‘Verily I take refuge in the Beneficent (Allah) from you! if you are God-fearing.’”

19. “He (the angel) said: ‘Verily I am only a messenger of your Lord that I bestow on you a pure son’.”

20. “She said: ‘How shall there be for me a son while no man has touched me, neither have I been unchaste.’”

One of the recommendations of Allah to His Messengers is that they should take refuge in Allah. Therefore, this state has been the moral life of the prophets and the saints of Allah, and that is why when the pious persons feel the probability of committing sin, they tremble in fear and take refuge in Allah, The Beneficent.

It is evident that, at that time, a great fear overcame her when this pious woman saw that a handsome foreigner had entered her sanctuary, therefore, she immediately said:

“Verily I take refuge in the Beneficent (Allah) from you! if you are God-fearing.”

Her Mentioning the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, and qualifying Him by His general mercy, on the one hand and encouraging the man to piety and being God-fearing, on the other, were all intended to deter that unfamiliar man if he had intended something evil.

By saying these words, Mary was expecting a reaction from the stranger, an expectation laden with fear and abundant anxiety.

But this situation did not last very long, and the stranger spoke and stated his great mission:

“He (the angel) said: ‘Verily I am only a messenger of your Lord...’”

This statement comforted Mary’s pure heart, as if water was poured over a fire.

But this relief did not last long, because immediately after that he added that he had come to bestow on her a son who would be pure from the point of temper, manner, body, and spirit.

The verse continues saying:

“...that I bestow on you a pure son’.”

However, the term /zakiyy/, used in the verse, is derived from /zakat/ in the sense of: ‘purity, growth, and blessing’, while the word /baqyan/, here, means ‘a prostitute’.